

MONTEZUMA RECEIVING NEWS OF THE LANDING OF CORTEZ.

Photographed by C. R. SAVAGE, from the original painting
by G. M. OTTINGER.

Cortez landed on the coast of Mexico April, 1519. Hardly were the anchors dropped and two canoes filled with natives visited his vessel; two of the persons in these boats were men of distinction in the Mexican Empire. One of them was *Tenitile*, governor of the province; the other was commander of the military forces. The Spaniard learned from his visitors facts that he wished to know respecting the great empire; *Tenitile* informing him that two hundred miles in the interior was situated the capital city, and that a monarch named Montezuma, beloved and revered by his subjects, reigned over an extended realm.

Cortez, with energy and boldness, landed his whole force upon the beach and immediately constructed a fortified camp. The friendly natives aided his men in building huts, and brought them presents of flowers and food. Governor *Tenitile* presented to Cortez many valuable ornaments of silver and gold, and inquired the purpose of the strangers' visit.

Cortez replied that he was a subject of Charles V., and desired to visit Montezuma in his capital. *Tenitile*, after praising and describing his monarch, informed Cortez that it would be first necessary to inform him of his arrival.

In the meantime runners had informed the Emperor of the strangers' appearance on the coast, and a council of nobles convened.

For several years rumors and reports of the formidable people and their appalling power had reached Mexico. Tradition also had taught them for ages that *Quetzalcoatl*, "God of the Air"—"The Fair God," the being from whom they had received all their laws, their knowledge of agriculture and other arts, and who had been driven from the country, would return and again be enthroned and restore his own religion. Montezuma believed the time of his return was at hand. To this fact it is to be attributed the discouraging impression that a fearful calamity which nothing could avert was impending over the na-

tion. With this general feeling the council decided that the visitor could be no other than the "Fair God" returning to rule. Ambassadors were sent, consisting of nobles, accompanied by a retinue of men of burden, laden with presents to Cortez, and the request that he would leave the coast.

Cortez still insisted on seeing the Emperor, but the ambassadors, as they retired, assured him it was impossible. They, however, took with them a few message presents—a roll of cloth, an image of the Virgin, a few crosses, and a helmet. This helmet *Tenitile* requested of Cortez, as he wished it for the Emperor, because he said it was like the helmet worn by *Quetzalcoatl*. They also took with them pictures painted by native artists, on rolls of cotton, of the ships, horses, cannon, &c.

THE PICTURE represents the return of the ambassadors; they meet Montezuma and his retinue in front of a temple, where they have been sacrificing to *Coatlhuac*, the Aztec goddess of flowers (this was in the third Mexican month, answering to our April). The Emperor is seated in his palanquin, borne by noblemen. He gazes with a sad and troubled countenance, and listens with dread to the old ambassador as he explains the pictures spread before him; crushed in spirit, he grasps the sceptre with both hands, feeling that he is destined soon to lose it. The Aztecs had three military orders—Princes, Eagles and Tigers. On the right, supporting the palanquin, is a Lord of Eagles, and on the left of the Emperor a Lord of Tigers; also a son of Montezuma, indicated by the royal green of his *Maxtlatl* (sash). The Mexicans subjugated several surrounding tribes, among others the *Acolhuans*, and when the king of that country, *Nezahualpilli*, died he divided his province between two of his sons, *Ixtlilxochitl* and *Cacamapatzin*. To the last named, a nephew of Montezuma, he gave the great city of *Tenexco*, the most prosperous part of his kingdom. The elder son was great-

ly displeased and, believing that his father had been prompted by Montezuma, looked upon him as a tyrannical foe. He, in fact, joined Cortez and assisted in the overthrow of the Aztec Empire. *Ixtlilxochitl* and a friend are near the trees to the right of the Emperor, while the brother, *Cacamac*, assists to support the canopy on the left of the lord clothed in the tiger skin. To the left and rear of *Cacamac* is *Cutliahua*, brother of Montezuma, Governor of *Ixtapalapan* and tenth Emperor of Mexico. His reign was of short duration (four months) being one of the first victims of the small-pox, introduced into the country by the Spaniards. The figure with the silver shield, emblazoned with an owl, is *Quetzalcoatl*, nephew and son-in-law of Montezuma, eleventh and last Emperor of Mexico. All historians record this monarch as being a young man of superior ability, the idol of the army and inveterate foe of the Spaniard; he was twenty-three or twenty-four years of age at the time of the invasion, and is described as being much lighter in complexion than the generality of his countrymen.

To the front and left of *Guatemaczin* is the lord holding the golden rod, always preceding the emperor and indicating his approach. He looks to a priest of the "God of Air," who points to the lance of that god, and with his hand refers to the helmet sent by *Tenitile*. Between but back of this lord and priest are two priests of *Micxtili*, "God of War," and the god most revered by the Aztecs; one holds an urn with burning copal, the other has in his hand the sacrificial knife of abedlan, still dripping with blood, blood also drops from his beard. The banners to the left of the canopy are the *Catus* (City of Mexico), eagle pouncing on tiger (empire of Mexico), and the city of Chalco (the gem). To the right are the Emperor's banner *Tlucio* (city of the ball ground), and *Tlacantzinco* (city in the rushes).